326 In addition, each year the blacksmiths join together and offer a
778 sacrifice on the communal anvil. All tools are placed around it,
796 overflowed with the blood of the victims.

An annual ceremony which also brings the craftsmen together has the purpose of asking Faro to help in the cooling of the wrought iron and to give the water into which the iron is dipped the strength to fulfill its function. Assembled before the kotigi's forge, they bring a certain number of tomatoes which are first presented to the altar, then to the ancestral axe farakun on which each one in turn licks with his tongue.

Keeping their mouths closed so as not to let the strength thus gathered escape, they all walk toward the river, while one of the [534 participants strikes up, on the ritual bell (nege dɛ̃) with a lump of 533] (nege dyun), the rhythm called klide fo (literally, rhythm of the sons of the testicles) (1) addressed to the one-arm blacksmith, the

1. Kli dɛ̃, "son of the testicle," is one [522] of the ritual jokes addressed to the blacksmiths by their senãnku.

bolokuruni, Faro's companion. Once on the bank, the kotigi undresses and throws himself into the water. When re reappears on the surface, all the participants open their hands the better to seize the strength of Faro and his companion, which the man is supposed to bring back. They rush to help him dress and the one who succeeds in touching him believes he receives Faro's special favors.

The tomatoes are then squashed into a gourd and the pulp is thrown into the river at a deep spot where each participant draws water and drinks to communicate with Faro. The group then returns, bringing back in the gourd a little water into which each one dips his individual axe, starting with the patriarch who, at the end of the ceremony, drinks up the rest.

326 If a woman is sterile, she asks the help of the three spirits protect-
778 ing the forge as they have the reputation of being very prolific.
842 Without her presence, the blacksmith crouches before the altar with his hands spread out, his head lowered, and prays. The woman must then swear to respect scrupulously the taboo of the invoked spirits, which is to pronounce their name. She may also ask the blacksmith to implore the help of the ritual ashes of the altar.

uncomplainingly the burns inflicted upon them with a torch and they whip themselves vigorously. The chief next teaches them the role of the Kworè spirits, the rituals celebrating them, and the symbolic value of the objects of the cult.

Some of the members are designated to take the role of kworę duga during the ceremonies. Masked and waving freshly cut branches in each hand, they mount a wooden horse, the kworęduga so (1). Thus

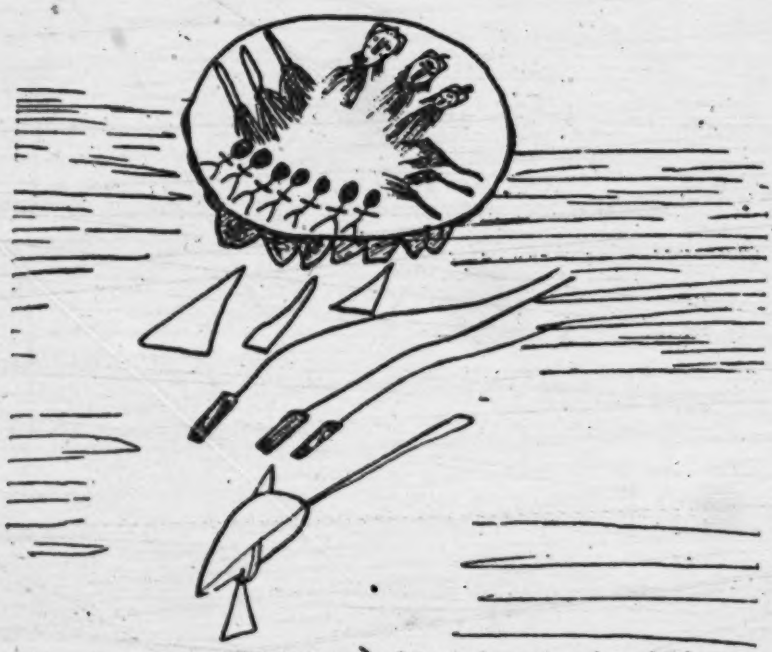

Fig. 13 —Stone altar of the Kworè of Banankoroni under which are buried three neolithic axes, three whips, the ritual iron axe, kongobwona. The drawing, made in the course of the annual ceremony, represents the first three of the eight ancestors who received the word, the members of the society, and the Kworè whips; the black spot is the "womb of Faro." (Drawing by an informant)

1. The kworę duga (literally, vulture of the Kworè), also called togoro koya, "jesters," are as their name indicates, jesters who have the right to joke about

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the most sacred things; their social position is comparable to that of the griot. In former times they were the first to sacrifice to the boli.

equipped, they represent the spirits of the kworo, mounted on their winged horses to attack the sky. One of them wears a mask, the kworo ku, to represent the ancestor of the group (1).

1. The materials, wooden horses, and masks are blackened by fire and saturated with karite oil.

794 Close bonds unite the Komo and the Kworè. Their cults complement each other and an individual wealthy enough to meet the necessary expenses may belong to the two societies. In fact, one of the Komo's roles is to watch /170/ over the progress of the cultivations; its altars watch over the soul and the vital force of the crop seeds. The harvest, however, depends on rain and thus comes under the jurisdiction of the altars of the Kworè. The complementary activity of the two societies is certainly felt by the users who declare that "the nõ boli of the Komo and the Kworè are united in action."

Some authors have raised the question of the Kworè's greater antiquity, when compared to that of the Komo, on the basis of the "Priapic" aspect of the former's ceremonies (2). Since the real purposes

2. See L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara, p. 311.

of the institution have almost completely escaped these observers, it was not possible for them to penetrate the meaning of these rituals. It is at the foot of the tree of the Kworè that men call upon the skies where Faro reigns; they pray to the koblenkaba in case of war, the sunãnkaba in case of epidemics, etc. The annual ceremony is a representation of the action of the invisible powers to obtain the rain necessary to men. The burns and the blows which the members inflict upon themselves, as well as the galloping of the koroduga, symbolize the celestial struggles of the spirits among the unleashed elements.

533 of black, red, and yellow fibers, clothes of plaited fibers, and the
292 musicians wear a cuirass made of fana seeds (a sort of bean). The bass player wears a band in the back which reaches to his heels and describes a circle when the musician whirls in going from north to south and from east to west to give the cadence. The other musicians form a circle which the dancers and singers do not enter. Another djo is the So, where the musicians and the singers wear masks of wooden horses, except for two clowns who represent the masculine element in the midst of the crowd of young girls. Lastly, the third djo is the djo buru (buru, "trumpet"). This is the djo of the slaves; they play the ivory horn and are clothed like the N'ganian, but the bass player represents a cow, and the others are the heifers who respond to the cadence indicated to them by their mother.

## E. Literature

538 Bambara literature, entirely oral, is extremely rich. It is the monopoly of the griot who from their earliest days learn the stories, the proverbs, the mottoes associated with each [108] family. They recite very long and very numerous epic songs concerning each great family, accompanying themselves on the harp. Certain parts are recited, others are sung in chorus by the griot and his wife. These stories are at the same time historical narratives of heroes' exploits and the mythical history of a demiurge symbolized by the hero. An infinitely small part of these epic songs has been collected. Some Bambara proverbs and stories have been collected by Moussa Traoré in particular.

545 It is interesting to mention another literary production, one
794 in which the creative inspiration of the artist plays a greater part:
● 522 these are the narratives of the members of the Kworé brotherhood. The Kworéduga are clowns, or rather commedia dell'arte players. One is a Kworéduga by hereditary transmission or by natural bent. During his initiation in the bush, where he submits to ritual harsh treatment, the initiate learns never to lose his temper, no matter what the circumstances. He is taught a comic language, witty sayings. He is trained to observe men's character closely and to recite stanzas and couplets giving his observations.

545 794 522 Example:

Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)

Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)

Ida konieti aïe (you are right)

N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)

Or again:

Demise fentili (the rich young man)

Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)

Ida konie tinaïe (what you say is not true)

N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 534 794 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accompany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which contains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

536 881 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example, the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 517 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181 In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [522] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

## The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

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1. Drums over a meter long and peculiar to the koré.

2. A kind of triangle which is hung on the thumb of the left hand and is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger.

[718] the kârâ"), one of whom carries the kârâ, the perforated board which is the emblem of the fetish and at the same time the altar on which sacrifice is made to deceased members. First come the souroukou (hyenas) who guard the sacred grove and during the sacrifices drive away prying, uninitiated people; they wear crude masks, roll their big heads right and left, and utter frightful "hou hous." The [522] korodouga (clowns), who rake the paths in the sacred grove as well as its environs to protect it from brush fires, run from one to another shouting obscenities. Furiously they shake their gourds, which have handles and are perforated and filled with small stones, and furiously they blow into pipes made of pumpkin stems. The leader of this [292] band is dressed up in a cloak made of reed stems, he also wears a reed headdress which is topped by a pyramid of large red beans called n'go blé and decorated with a plume; in his hands he holds the emblem of the group, a long pole on which are hung dirty bags, sorghum stems 10 to 20 centimeters long bound into bundles, pumpkin stems, /123/ skulls of rats, beaks of ducks and hawks, panther claws, etc.

794 796 292 522 Apart from the long string of red beans which all korodougo are required to wear which they twine around their necks several times or sling over the shoulder, crossing and recrossing it on the back and chest, each one dresses according to his own inspiration. The hats are made of bunches of feathers, wings of vultures and ducks, and even entire birds, and around them to decorate them further are red beans, rat skulls, birds beaks, claws, and small bones; all these objects fall on the neck and shoulders and knock together with a sinister sound. Next to men in full breeches are men in rags or men with close-fitting trousers made of innumerable pieces all in different

colors, one leg of which goes down to the ankle while the other does not even reach the knee. Some brandish wooden swords, and others ride astride on a bamboo, a reed, or a sorghum stalk, rearing and kicking, and there is not one who does not act the clown.

The bisatjila (flagellants) make their flexible whips whistle in the air; shortly thereafter these whips rain blows onto their backs; the ta tougoula (fire lighters, incendiaries) seem impatient to shower their bare backs with sparks. The djara (lions) or sogo (beasts, animals) with masks even larger than those of the souroukou (hyenas) growl around the n'goni sama (1), also called wara (fearless wild animals).

1. N'goni, "thorns"; sama, "to kill for oneself."

The soula run from one group to another, slip between legs, and never stay still; they are seen everywhere, sometimes standing, sometimes with hands on the ground on all fours, or again sitting down, breaking bundles of grass or bits of wood between their hands and throwing them with shrill cries at the heads of their companions. And at the end of the procession come the old men, weighed down by the years and no longer of an age for all this fancy dress. They drag or carry the victims intended for the sacrifices.

In the grove around the sacred tree, there is a deafening noise of drums, triangles, reed pipes, and many voices /124/ that shout all together without ever harmonizing. At a sign from the leader, the kôrâ bearer goes and stands before the fetish tree, and everything becomes calm and quiet. The youths who have been waiting for seven years to be initiated advance in a line, fall on their knees before the fetish and its emblem, and then prostrate themselves with foreheads in the dust. They remain in this position as long as the sacred hymn lasts. On rising, they say: "Djanté koré déou djanté (djanté children of the djanté koré), djanté ma (man of the djanté)," and each dances the dance of the group to which he belongs. These dances are indecent and always conclude with an obscene gesture.

The oldest sons belong to the groups of their fathers; as to the others, they choose the group they like best. Thenceforth they are

794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a [522] stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
782 and finally to the shades of its initiates, the koródé. There is always
764 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they